

World Bank Education Policy and Human Resource Development in sub-Saharan Africa

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### Abstract

There is increasing interest in the intersection of education and training through societal development in the developing world, a concept linked to national human resource development (NHRD). In addition, education and training is known to correlate strongly with employment outcomes that are connected to economic success, health and family stability and social connections (Hout, 2012). The purpose of this paper is to explore the influence of World Bank education policies on national human resource development in sub-Saharan Africa. It is important for policy makers to consider how World Bank education policy and funding shapes national human resource development policy in the region of sub-Saharan Africa. This review of literature focuses on NHRD literature identifies World Bank education policy and NHRD policy to provide a framework for understanding the link between policies developed at the World Bank and national policy initiatives in sub-Saharan African nations. The implications for human resource development (HRD) and importance to NHRD research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: higher education, national human resource development, vocational education and training, World Bank policy, sub-Saharan Africa.

Paprock (2006) notes that in the developing parts of the world the aspect of national human resource development (NHRD) is being given increasing emphasis. This paper seeks to highlight national human resource development in the sub-Saharan African region and the influence of World Bank education policies from the early 1960s to the 2000s.

Mores (2005) points out that national policy is a government's response to complex and dynamic economic systems and they do not happen in isolation. While the emerging economies in sub-Saharan Africa have often pursued national human resource development policy often it is linked to funding from the World Bank and organizations like it. This paper seeks to expand the view of NHRD in Africa by showing how education policy developed at the World Bank affects local human resource development (HRD) practices. The decision to explore sub-Saharan Africa as a region is based on Paprock's (2006) idea that the context of NHRD varies from organizations and their subsystems as well as parts of communities, nations, regions, and indeed the world.

Truty (2006) points out, within NHRD, education is advocated for the purpose of workforce development and "issues of literacy, numeracy and the ability to read one's world are embedded in the pedagogy of choice therefore important to modeling NHRD" (p.2). Due to Spring's (2009) assertion that the World Bank (WB) is the leading global investor in education and is linked through extensive networks to other worldwide organizations makes it an important entity worth exploring. Through these networks, the World Bank is a major participant in global discourses about education and workforce development through training. The World Bank's worldwide networks influence local education practices and human resource development initiatives around the world, including Africa.

Many education and training programs in sub-Saharan Africa have been centrally funded from funding obtained from the World Bank. Central funding involves distribution of program funding from the central government and decisions on how programs are executed are made usually at the top of government. For this reason, it is important to explore how World Bank education policies affect HRD policies and practices on a national level.

Many discussions on factors that affect NHRD in sub-Saharan Africa have centered on HIV/AIDS, gender issues and the use of technology to drive economic growth (Sydhagen & Cunningham, 2007). However, there is little discussion on how World Bank education policy affects national policy in sub-Saharan Africa. McLean (2004) clarifies that each country will have its own definition of national human resource development that is appropriate and necessary. While sub-Saharan Africa has a high level of regional and local diversity according to Sydhagen and Cunningham (2007) for the purpose of this paper it will be dealt with as a single entity. As a region, sub-Saharan Africa is facing numerous challenges in terms of poverty, war, HIV/AIDS, skills shortage, brain drain and challenges in development which are important for researchers to explore (Sydhagen et al., 2007).

In summing up the history of WB education funding Psacharopolous (2006) points out that between 1945 and 1963, the World Bank did not have a clear policy on education. However, from 1963 to 1987, they shifted towards manpower planning, then vocational and technical education and more recently, because of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to primary and basic education with the goal of including lifelong learning as a basis for human resource development. In practice, loans in the 1960s and the 1970s were dominated by loans mainly for technical-vocational education at the secondary and post-secondary level. In the 1990s, the World Bank joined forces with UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF to launch the Education for All

(EFA) initiatives which will be discussed later (Psacharopolous (2006). National human resource development is growing in importance because according to McLean (2004) human resources are critical to national and local stability. He asserts that HRD is important in creating integrated systems to deal with poverty, violence, unemployment and illiteracy.

Several countries in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted various NHRD models to develop their human capital. There are currently five emerging models for NHRD according Cho and McLean (2004): (a) centralized NHRD, (b) transitional NHRD, (c) government initiated NHRD, (d) decentralized/ free market NHRD and (e) small nation NHRD. While each country adopts a different model they will often borrow aspects of NHRD from other nations. This exploration of the literature shows how even though different countries in Africa adopt a variety of models they are also affected by changing policy and funding at the WB. For the purpose of this paper, the World Bank will be abbreviated as WB, National Human Resource Development as NHRD, International Human Resource Development as IHRD, sub-Saharan Africa as SSA and technical and vocational skills development as TVSD.

### **Purpose of the Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to explore the influence of World Bank education policy on national human resource development in sub-Saharan African countries. This review is divided into the following sections: (a) Method, (b) Findings and (c) Implications for human resource development research and study.

In order to expand the knowledge base in NHRD, it is important according to Cho and McLean (2004) that academics no longer hold to narrow definitions of HRD. It is clear that around the world, with some significant exceptions, the concept of HRD is much broader with

much greater impact than has been acknowledged in many academic programs and much of the literature of the field. This paper will explore the four dimensions (political system, economic system, social system and education system) for analyzing NHRD as proposed by Lynham and Cunningham (2006) through the various WB education policies.

### **Method**

The expected result of this literature review is to explore the influence of WB education policy on national human resource development initiatives in SSA. The findings of this review of literature will be useful to those responsible for crafting policy. The literature review was limited to peer-reviewed journals and articles and WB publications that specify policy and policy implementation. The following research questions guided the literature review:

1. What does the literature say about World Bank education policy in sub-Saharan Africa?
2. What does the literature say about national human resource development (NHRD) policy in sub-Saharan Africa?
3. What does the literature say about human resource development initiatives that have been influenced by the World Bank?

In addition, the author will explore the various definitions for human resource development, national human resource development and International human resource development. The definition of HRD continues to expand around the core of developing human potential in various capacities. Swanson and Holton (2009) describe HRD as, “a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving individual, team, work process, and organizational system performance (p.4). While Wilson (2012), defines HRD as, “the processes for increasing the cognitive, affective and behavioral capacities of all people and organizations in

a society” (p.9). These definitions of HRD have been expanded as the field of HRD is explored in different contexts.

The increasing global environment in which HRD practitioners operate increases the need for a definition that explores these relationships. Peterson (1997) defined International HRD as “all of the following: unicultural (for example, HRD in Poland), intercultural (for example, HRD in a multinational firm with offices in the United States, Peru, and Sweden), and general (for example, HRD in an international joint venture (p.64). In addition, Metcalfe & Rees (2005) define International HRD as, “a broad term that concerns processes that address the formulation and practice of HRD systems, practices and policies at the global, societal and organizational level. It can concern itself with how governments and international organizations develop and nurture international managers and how they develop global HRD systems, it can incorporate comparative analyses of HRD approaches across nations and also how societies develop national HRD policies” (p. 455). The expansion of the definition of IHRD is reflected in Wang and McLean (2001) to include government entities and cooperation across national borders.

The definition of HRD has also been expanded with the concept of national human resource development. National HRD refers to the development of a national policy to improve the well being of its citizenry and is normally devised by governmental departments (Kim, 2012). According to Swanson and Holton (2001), there is a need for HRD in developing nations to address the challenges of developing their human resources as a national asset and source of sustainable development and competitiveness which calls for a broader definition of NHRD. McLean, Bartlett and Cho (2003) add education, health, safety, and other factors to their definition of NHRD. Therefore, the author chooses the definition of HRD that encompasses the

different contexts of HRD in a global environment as proposed by McLean and McLean (2001) whereby:

Human resource development is any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation or, ultimately, the whole of humanity (p.10).

### **Article Search Procedure**

An extensive and systematic search was conducted using the following keywords: *World Bank policy in Africa, World Bank education policy, NHRD in Africa, vocational education in Africa*. Databases were searched in international organizations, such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the World Bank (WB). Academic databases included: Business Source Complete, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Human Resource Abstracts. Journals where multiple articles on World Bank education policy and Human Resource Development and Economic Development in Africa were published included: *Advances in Developing Human Resources, Human Resource Development International, Journal of Economic Development* and *International Journal of Economic Development*. The author also reviewed cited references from retrieved articles.

### **Selection Criteria**

Journal articles and publications in English were selected from: refereed and non-refereed journals, research reports, and book chapters. All selected material was published after 1996. The initial search yielded 322 articles. Then the author reviewed abstracts, findings, and summary sections of the publications as the final step in short listing the articles. Finally, 43 journal articles, research reports and book chapters met the selection criteria.

### **Analysis**

The author identified core themes relevant to NHRD and World Bank education policy in sub-Saharan Africa from this pool of scholarly literature. The core themes were analyzed, sorted, and grouped under various categories. The categories were further refined and emerging connections among them were noted for discussion.

The author reviewed the literature through content analysis and identified major themes. The themes that emerged from this analysis reflected a change in WB policy first through periods of manpower analysis, then, a focus on vocational education and now, basic education as the primary focus of human resource development programs in many African countries. The literature review will show that as WB education policy shifted in various countries, national policy on human resource development also shifted.

### **Findings**

An examination of WB policies according to Ilon (1996) shows a shift from human capital focused education and training towards human resource development policies that focused on stabilization. Ilon (1996) describes stabilization policies promoted through poverty alleviation, community empowerment and democracy. By focusing on stabilization, the World Bank established itself as a global welfare agency. However, according to Ilon (1996):

The WB has substantially changed the tenor of its educational policy in the last 20 years. Where once "human capital" and economic growth were the predominant themes, current policies focus on poverty alleviation and as "the single largest source of external funding for education," WB educational policies influence education far beyond the confines of educational projects (p.420).

### **National Human Resource Development in sub-Saharan Africa**

Sub-Saharan African countries as a region are transitioning to the preconditions for take-off stage according to Rostow's Theory of Development. In this phase, economic growth becomes possible and there are increased opportunities for private profit, improved quality of life for the poor and better education opportunities guided by old social structures and values (Wang, Korte & Sun, 2008). Policy recommendations by development economists have been widely adopted by nations and international organizations including the WB.

The main source of funding for higher education and training in most sub-Saharan African countries according to Banya & Elu (2001) are central government grants. For example, institutions involved in adult education and training will typically submit their operating expenses to the Ministry of Education, which then forwards the estimates to the Ministry of Finance. The budget is then allocated centrally.

As Ziderman (2001) points out, in nearly all SSA countries public training systems are the leading source of structured, pre-employment training and formal sector training. According to Johanson & Adams (2004), state sponsored training systems play an important role in all countries in sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, many nations introduced national coordinating bodies and national training authorities responsible for developing training and allocating resources. The state automatically becomes the major financier of training; but, due to financial constraints, governments are often forced to explore new sources regionally and internationally. In Ziderman's (2007) report for the WB, he points out that fiscal restraint as a central feature of structural adjustment has constrained governments in adequately funding public sector training.

NHRD in sub-Saharan Africa has evolved. Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, WB policy that encouraged the growth of large capital and import-intensive operations and discouraged the development of small-scale private operations that would have relied on intermediate technologies. These large capital projects then increased the demand for highly skilled and experienced managers and technicians, which could only be met from abroad because the local labor market was still severely underdeveloped (The World Bank Group, 2012).

Fluitman (2001) describes the current state of human resource development in Africa as facing untold challenges. Consequently vocational training and other modes of skills development are being confronted by issues of coverage and quality. Typically, very few school leavers anywhere have access to government-supported institutions that offer pre-employment training. Those who do will often find that these programs are not aimed at non-existing jobs and are hardly appreciated by employers. Increasingly, private providers, be they commercial or not-for-profit institutions, have entered the training market.

On the whole, however, the impact of private provider appears to be limited. Other training agents include relatively few medium and large-scale private sector enterprises that are running their own training facilities. Such firms absorb only a minute fraction of the labor force of African countries. Most working people, therefore, acquire the skills they use, however inadequate these may be, by: trial and error, on the job, or through some form of organized learning such as traditional apprenticeship (Fluitman, 2001).

According to Fluitman (2001), national training systems, admittedly small and ineffective, are typically focused on industrial and service occupations, as if skills were not of critical importance in agricultural and related activities. In fact, agriculture accounts for more than half of the Gross National Product (GNP) in many African countries, as well as for the huge

portion of foreign exchange earnings; but most agricultural labor is deployed in small- holdings, at subsistence levels of productivity (Fluitman, 2001).

### **The World Bank in sub-Saharan Africa**

The World Bank through its subsidiary, the International Development Association (IDA), provides interest free loans and grants to governments of the poorest nations (Spring, 2009). Through its 'Knowledge Economy' principle, the WB believes knowledge is the most important factor in economic development. According to the WB Working Paper on the knowledge economy by Chen & Dahlman (2005):

A Knowledge Economy (KE) is one that utilizes knowledge as the key engine of economic growth. It is an economy where knowledge is acquired, created, disseminated and used effectively to enhance economic development. It has been found that the successful transition to the Knowledge Economy typically involves elements such as long-term investments in education (p. 4).

One of the pillars of the knowledge economy according to Chen and Dahlman (2005) is an educated and skilled worker who can continuously upgrade and adapt their skills. As a result the WB has aimed their financial investment towards this cause. The assistance of the WB in education for the knowledge economy according to Spring (2009) is aimed at helping countries adapt their entire education systems to the new challenges of the learning economy in two complementary ways: formation of a strong human capital base and effective national innovative system.

### **The 1960s**

King & Palmer (2007) note that prior to the 1960s, the World Bank had little involvement in human resource development and no specific strategy for development in Africa. It had a

global strategy statement that it would help finance the capital requirements of vocational, technical, and diversified secondary education that was not specific to any particular region. This strategy was not completely appropriate or adequate in much of Africa where many of the other necessary elements for its successful application—for example, the managerial skills, the teaching materials, properly prepared teachers, properly prepared and motivated students, and availability of appropriate jobs upon graduation—were often missing. It could have worked well if governments had the capacity to compensate using other funds to create a more balanced investment program or had been able to effectively argue with Bank officials for special treatment, as did many governments in other parts of the world. This did not happen in SSA. The consequence was less value added from the investments made than might have been the case.

The WB recommended that vocational training was to be located in three areas: secondary schools, colleges prior to employment and in enterprises (Bennell, 1998). The WB's education policy position was that specialist school based vocational and technical education was inefficient and ineffective and was best imparted in the workplace and should be enterprise based. Psacharopoulos (2006) points out that the WB was against vocational education and training taking place inside the main school system. Instead, the Bank always promoted vocational education outside the main school system. Vocational education was conducted in dedicated vocational schools. In addition, World Bank policy that affected national human resource development in sub-Saharan Africa was driven by human capital theory and education and training which made-up the investments in people was to increase productivity and economic development (Psacharopoulos, 2006).

According to Heyneman (2003), the WB in the 1960s began using human capital measurements in its analytic work because of the increasing emphasis of human capital over

physical capital goods. From 1962 to 1980, all education investments supported by the Bank required justifications on the basis of manpower demands.

A report published by the Independent Evaluation Group at the WB (2012) shows that they encouraged expansion of education systems beyond sustainable limits without seriously investigating the recurrent cost implications of its actions during the 1960s and 1970s, but, by 1985, they had reduced their overall support for this sector. During the 1981-83 period, sub-Saharan Africa received about \$2.00 per capita in external assistance for education, about twice that received by other regions. Of this amount, the WB contributed 17 percent, making it the second largest donor after France (The World Bank Group, 2012).

### **The 1980s**

Based on the report discussed above, the World Bank was heavily involved in sub-Saharan Africa. During the 1980s, the WB played a major role in funding education in SSA. In the 1981-83 period, Sub-Saharan Africa received about \$2.00 per capita in external assistance for education, about twice that received by other regions. Of this amount, the Bank contributed 17 percent, making it the second largest donor after France. Since then, the Bank's share has increased, reaching nearly 22 percent in 1990. Its cumulative commitments through FY92 amounted to \$2.8 billion. This is about 7 percent of its total commitments to Africa, compared to 5 percent globally. On a per capita basis, it means that on average each African has received more than twice the level of Bank assistance than individuals in other parts of the world. Within Africa, while nearly all countries have had at least one Bank-funded education project, the per capita allocation of Bank funds bears no relationship to per capita income (The World Bank Group, 2012).

The report published by the Independent Evaluation Group at the WB (2012) shows their efforts in the development of national policy in human resource development have evolved in a variety of dimensions: from the application of a global policy to the elaboration of region-specific, and increasingly, country-specific, policies, from providing one critical input-mainly civil works-to providing more and more of the whole package of inputs required to make a project work, from a focus on expansion of the system to an increasing focus on improvements, and from little involvement in policy issues (other than what was necessary for a given project) to considerable involvement, including not only sector wide but non-sector issues when important for sector operations (The World Bank Group, 2012).

The use of ‘rate of return’ methodologies from the 1970s to 1980s favored certain vocational training over academic education (Heyneman, 2003). Until 1980, the World Bank’s education staff were mostly economists focused on manpower planning, educators and project architects. Following the publication of the Education Sector Policy Paper of 1980, Bank staff was encouraged to use the rate of return methodologies in its analytic work. This led to greater and clearer justification for primary and academic secondary education and less focus on adult training and development.

King and Palmer (2006) describe the 1980s, as a period which saw structural adjustment and cost-sharing measures deeply affecting public provision of education and training, while rate-of-return studies appeared to weaken the case for external support for post-primary. Countries which had incorporated vocational and technical education into their formal education systems in the mid-1980s, had to do so without donor aid but it remained popular for many national governments especially in SSA. In other words, shifts in donor policy had a much

greater effect on sub-Saharan Africa, with its relative dependence on external financing, than on other regions (King & Palmer, 2006).

King and Palmer (2006) believe technical and vocational skills development (TSVD) has remained politically attractive in many developing and developed countries because it is assumed that it closely links to the world of employment and work. These expectations of technical and vocational skills training have become greater than for those of general education even when policy makers and politicians continue to shrink the budget allocations for this sector in favor of general education (King and Palmer 2006). This policy decision has been surprisingly prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa as well as more donors work towards general/ basic education.

These rate of return studies led to three common education policy recommendations: (a) to shift public expenditures away from vocational and higher education toward academic and basic education, (b) to increase the private cost for attending universities, and (c) to install loan schemes to set off the financial burden on individuals who now must face high tuition fees for higher education (Heyneman, 2012). These policy recommendations at the WB led to a belief in the inferiority of vocation and technical education and training to a focus on academic work. A result of WB policy shift to basic education has inevitably created an attitude in which according to Adams (2006), general academic schooling is regarded by many as being a better preparation for the available formal employment opportunities. In countries with either a general lack of jobs for TVSD graduates and/or inadequate support for micro- and small-enterprise (MSE) start up, TVSD is likely to remain less popular than general schooling. In countries like South Korea, China and Mozambique, where formal job growth has been sustained in recent years through both national and foreign direct investment, and where there has been policy

commitment to quality work skills, demand for technical and vocational education and training has been strong (Adams, 2006).

Through its Education Working Paper, the World Bank urged the raising of the proportion of educational lending from 11% to 27% and reduced the proportion of money going to higher education from 40% to 30% (Banya & Elu, 2001). In general, the returns were higher for completing primary and secondary education than higher education. These rate of return studies led to three common recommendations: shift public expenditures away from vocational and higher education toward academic and basic education, increase the private cost of attending universities and installation of loan schemes to set off the financial burden on individuals who must now face high tuition fees for higher education (Heyneman, 2003).

Justifications for higher education lending were confined to efficiency and equity rationales. During this period there were no external institutions to counter the WB's educational policy and funding decisions because according to Heyneman (2003) UNESCO's cooperative program for assistance was 75% financed by the World Bank as were many other agencies. As Samoff and Carroll (2004) describe, decisions were supported by reports of higher social rates of return for investment in basic education and high private benefits for adult training and higher education.

In 1984-5, nearly 25% of new education sector lending was devoted to Vocational and Technical Education Projects. By 1996, this share had fallen to a mere 3%. According to Bennell and Segerstrom (1998), they have managed to convince governments in sub-Saharan Africa that basic education should be their top priority and that public expenditure should be reduced significantly. They believed vocational and technical education funding should be left to the individual, enterprises and private sector training institutions with government intervention kept

to a minimum. The rationale is that demand driven training systems with private sector provision have out-performed supply driven systems that rely mostly on public sector training institutions. The change in World Bank policy was driven by the poor performance of a sizeable proportion of Bank funded vocational education projects (Bennell & Segerstrom, 1998).

### **The 1990s**

After the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, universal primary education (UPE) came back on to the international agenda. According to the World Bank Report in 2004, this was adopted as an International Development Target (IDT) in 1996, and as a Millennium Development Goal (MDG) from 2000. TVSD was excluded from both the IDTs and the MDGs. Many donors, including the Department for International Development (DFID), made the MDGs central to their development priorities. The World Bank's path-breaking policy study on vocational and technical education in 1991 appeared to challenge this trend, but it was widely interpreted as discouraging public provision of TVSD, and as supporting good basic education as a foundation for post-school skills, instead of school-based TVSD. This inevitably created a shift in national human resource development policy in many African countries.

After the global economic woes of the 1990s, the World Bank was unwilling to maintain past levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA). As a result they restructured existing loans and imposed higher interest rates and more stringent conditions such as reduction in public sector spending (Shizha et al., 2011). The government was urged to limit or moderate enrollment by reducing or freezing student intake and to contain costs by lowering expenditures for academic and non-academic staff and student support (Banya et al., 2001).

By the early 1990s, World Bank education funding policies influenced a shift in the structure of higher education and adult training initiatives. In order to access funds from the

World Bank they were required to implement Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP). ESAP was backed by the belief of WB officials that higher education leads to substantially higher earnings and therefore ought to be financed by those who gain. In addition there was a push towards primary education because it supposedly had higher returns. The World Bank perpetuated neglect of higher education and adult training in Sub-Saharan Africa because of the belief that primary and secondary education was more important for development. This belief was based on studies of the social returns from investment in education that tended to show that such investment had better returns from investment in primary and secondary education compared to higher education and adult education and training. Shizha (2011) notes that a weakness in the cost-benefit analysis conducted by Psacharopoulos and Patrinos is that the calculations of the individual benefits for higher education graduates include future income while the calculations for basic education do not compute that variable.

From 1985 to 1989, 17% of the Bank's worldwide education sector spending was on higher education. However, from 1995 to 1999, only 7% was allocated to this sector (Heyneman, 2003). Governments in Sub-Saharan Africa were pressured by the World Bank to cut spending on higher education and to reallocate their meager resources to primary and secondary education. These cuts in higher education further increased Africa's dependence on foreign study opportunities which often increase the probability of brain drain occurring (Banya et al., 2003).

In 1991, the WB adopted the following policies: much less emphasis on public sector provision and funding of 'pre-employment training', the rapid phasing out of trade school type training, greater reliance on enterprise-based training with increased freedom for individuals and enterprises to choose Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers, increased cost recovery from training recipients, improved planning of VET using 'labor market analysis' that

focuses on the labor market outcomes of training investments, the removal of labor market and other government policies that dampen demand for training and distort labor market signals, and the establishment of autonomous training agencies with strong private sector representation (Bennell et al, 1998).

Terreblanche (2002) points out that most countries in sub-Saharan Africa were undergoing the struggle to transform from dominantly agrarian to industrialized economies and societies in spite of a number being mineral rich and with their human resources being a primary means for achieving this goal. He asserts that they are simultaneously, under pressure by the Bretton Wood institutions (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) imposing often impossible barriers to their entry into this global marketplace, thereby resulting in substantial burdens of national foreign debt and economic apartheid (Lynham, 2006).

The mid-1990s, for example, the WB funding accounted for 25% of the total International Development Assistance to education (Bennell & Furlong, 1996). This fact was the result of an increase in the number and amount of educational loans and the reduction of direct bilateral aid. The share of education loans in the WB budget has changed from less than 4% in 1980 to 10% in 1996, rising to nearly two billion dollars (Bennell & Segerstorm, 1998).

The narrow if quantitatively successful focus of the 1990s, on primary education has produced enormous pressures on the still small secondary and vocational systems of many countries. Hence there is significant interest in TVSD among governments in Africa as they consider what happens after primary education. But apart from the sheer numbers, the quality of these new generations of aspirants for post-primary education is causing very grave concern.

The political and policy communities in many developing countries remain attracted by the assumed link between TVSD and a reduction in unemployment, through acquiring work-skills. For example, the background document for the African Union's TVET Experts' meeting (13-14 December 2006 in Addis Ababa), the 'Strategy to Revitalize Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Africa', states that:

One of the most important features of TVET is its orientation towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills. TVET delivery systems are therefore well placed to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce that Africa needs to create wealth and emerge out of poverty. (p. 5)

The reduction of educational expenditure and its effects on publicly funded education and training is probably one of the clearest and most dramatic direct effects of Structural Adjustment Programs on developing countries in the sub-Saharan Africa region. During the 1980s, those countries that followed SAPs reduced public expenditure in education more than those that did not (Reimers, 1997). This contraction meant the impossibility to expand the public educational system with sub-Saharan Africa being especially affected. Education access fell down in all educational levels. Transition to secondary education was particularly dramatic until 1990; it did not achieve the same rates of 1970. The reduction of public expenditure had also consequences on educational quality and provision for training and development programs (Bonal, 2002). Financing basic education has become a priority at the cost of vocational, technical and even higher education. This was legitimized through almost irrefutable arguments on the economics of education which places basic education as the most important aspect of human resource development.

As a result the rates-of-return rationale has also legitimized other priorities in policy making in many African countries. The WB has used it to encourage more user participation in the financing of post-basic education and training. According to Bonal (2002), the model of development promoted by the WB places education as one of the central mechanism to train human capital and to include poor countries into the knowledge-driven global economy. Even when other agencies are used, the WB according to Bonal (2002) maintains ‘the last word on the best practice to implement’ and since they are providing the financial resources to carry out development projects they play a vital role in human resource development.

### **The 2000s**

Since 2002, the WB has begun to refocus on lifelong learning which encompasses adult training and development. This mention of lifelong learning is surprising given the WB was the leader in arguing for closing down much of the non formal and adult education in the 1980s, as part of its almost exclusive emphasis on primary education (Klees, 2002). The effort today on adult education is a small fraction of what it was at the end of the 1970s. This third policy direction focuses on “distance education, open learning, and the use of new technologies,” a theme of The Bank and some other agencies, USAID in particular, since the 1970s (Klees, 2002).

The African Virtual University (AVU) was a WB project launched at Kenyatta University in April 1998. Amutabi and Oketch (2003) describe it as,

A satellite-based distance education project with a network of internet facilities that uses a multimedia approach to teaching and learning. The AVU learning package comprises live pre-recorded lectures transmitted by satellite and viewed on a television screen plus handouts, textbooks, lecture guidelines and programs/schedules on transmission, and

other materials that are transmitted electronically. The AVU network is modeled on the highly successful distance-learning networks operational in the North, especially the United States, Europe, Australia and other parts of the developed world. The materials come from Colorado State University, the University of Massachusetts and New Jersey Institute of Technology in the USA and University College Galway in Ireland. (p. 62)

The African Virtual University is an attempt by the WB to boost adult training through virtual learning technologies which covers 17 countries namely: Kenya, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, South Sudan, Sudan, The Gambia, and Guinea Bissau (African Virtual University, 2012). AVU is supposed to offer technology based credit courses and non-credit seminars at each of the centers in the various countries using digital satellite technology (Amutabi & Oketch, 2003).

In 2005, Uganda launched the Youth Opportunities Program to provide training to unemployed youth through vocational skills, trade skills, leadership abilities, community reconciliation and conflict resolution. In 2008, the World Bank supported the Technical and Vocational Vouchers Program in Kenya created to evaluate the demand for vocational training and the impact of training on job-seekers. In collaboration with other organizations the WB has developed a Youth Employment Inventory that provides information on more than 500 youth employment programs in 90 countries (The World Bank, 2012).

The WB defines the following knowledge and competencies for lifelong learning: basic academic skills such as literacy, foreign language, math and science skills and the ability to use information and communication technology (Spring, 2009). In addition, workers must use these skills effectively while acting autonomously in order to function in socially heterogeneous

groups. As a result funding for adult and lifelong learning has been guided by these principles.

However, Spring (2009) points out there are not enough jobs in the knowledge economy.

Increased value on the knowledge economy has led to funding being directed towards this effort and most governments changing policy to fit into this model.

Spring (2009) points out that many countries are then forced to pay back loans to the WB granted under the auspices of advancing workers in the 'knowledge economy' but experience but instead experience little economic growth from that investment. Most of the educated workers from developing nations choose to move to wealthier nations in a phenomenon known as 'brain drain'. Hence the benefits of loans from the WB are hardly realized in the quest to improve human resource development in the borrowing country.

### **Implications for Research**

The influence of WB policy on NHRD in sub-Saharan Africa presents an opportunity for researchers to explore the challenges of HRD in a global economy. This review of literature directly addresses the expressed concerns for future research needs as identified in the call by McLean (2004) to research different ways NHRD might be implemented. There is a need for more research on how NHRD is implemented in various contexts in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, for sub-Saharan Africa in particular there is a need according to Sydhagen and Cunningham (2007) to develop and implement theories based on culture and needs of individual countries.

In practice this paper seeks to provide policy makers with a perspective of how external influences shape NHRD policy. According to Lynham and Cunningham (2006), SSA countries are under pressure by the Bretton Wood institutions (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) that have

imposed impossible barriers to their entry into this global marketplace, thereby resulting in substantial burdens of national foreign debt and economic apartheid. It is important for policy makers to consider how external policies are affecting the ability of SSA to develop and unleash their human resources.

Therefore, the objective and expected outcome of the literature review has been to provide a comprehensive literature review of how World Bank education policy has influenced and continues to influence the role of government in human resource development in SSA. It is expected that as NHRD continues to evolve in this global economy there will continue to be a need to examine how external forces shape national policy. This paper is an attempt to contribute to that field of scholarship.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, as Ziderman (2007) points out, there will likely be a central and continuing role for the state in most SSA countries in the delivery and financing of education and training initiatives. However, the role of national governments continues to be influenced by, “an almost monopoly on ideas in technological, cultural, social, economic and political realms” (Amutabi & Oketch, 2003). Based on the Working Paper published by the WB, regardless of the underlying model, it is a fairly robust finding that a country’s human capital is almost always identified as an essential ingredient for achieving growth (Chen & Dahlman, 2005). Hence we can expect that they will continue to exert some influence over human resource development in sub-Saharan Africa.

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